



# Case Study of West Sixth Brewing

## Keys to Success



### Project Description



### Economic Value



### Challenges & Advice



### Benefits



### Stewardship Meaning



The West Sixth Brewing Company in Lexington, is a craft brewery, founded by Joe Kuosman, Ben Self, Robin

Sither and Brady Barlow, located at the end of Jefferson Street in the Rainbo Bread Company building. The business is the first Kentucky craft brewery to can its beer and has the ability to produce 180 barrels per month.

The redeveloped two-story building, which also has a basement and dates back to 1880, is now called The Bread Box. It is located in the historic Northside Neighborhood.

Besides the brewery, tap room and beer garden in the front corner of The Bread Box, the 90,000-square-foot structure will host “other companies and community organizations that share our values, beliefs and commitment to the community,” according to the owners. Other organizations scheduled to occupy portions of the building are The Broke Spoke Community Bike Shop; Cricket Press; the Roller Girls of Central Kentucky and FoodChain, a nonprofit

urban indoor food-farming production and education operation that includes growing leafy greens and raising tilapia in tanks.



Purchased in August 2011, the building was certified for brownfield zoning for adaptive reuse by the Kentucky Brownfield Redevelopment Program.

It was the first single-use building in Lexington to meet four of the seven criteria for this designation, which makes it available for retail, office or residential use and increases its value.

A large portion of the historic building consists

of large, open rooms with industrial-style windows. One of the attractions for the owners was that the floors, walls and roof are intact, so there were lots of original parts to the building, with things that could be reused. In the room where the brewery is housed, the original yellow tile walls remain, still in good condition. Several rooms have original tile floors. Portions of the old maple loading dock and wood

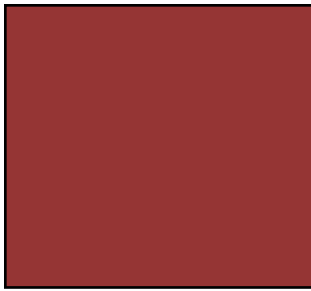
“By choosing a brownfield, we knew it would be less expensive to locate in an existing structure, but there would be unknown conditions to face.”

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from the University of Kentucky's Memorial Coliseum were used to form the bar area. Metal came from the mixers in the upper floor of The Bread Box.

When the owners were searching for a location, they knew they wanted their business to be in a neighborhood near downtown and be environmentally friendly and sustainable. By choosing a brownfield, they realized it would be less expensive to locate in an existing structure, but they also knew there would be unknown conditions to face. The building had been vacant for many years.

"All the windows needed steel lintels," says Self. "Part of the floor was on a concrete slab, while there was a crawl space under the rest of it. All of the copper had been stolen. The windows were blocked



The barreled ceiling adds architectural character to the structure.

in and had to be removed. But the building has tons of architectural character with several features, including its barreled roof. If you are considering purchasing a brownfield, go for it, but expect surprises and challenges."

The Bread Box is close to downtown at a great location and was not an overly expensive building. The building already had a cooler in the back, floor drains and industrial utilities, all of which are perfect for West Sixth Brewing.

Also, several other factors made this a great location. The next phase of the Legacy Trail, a biking and jogging path, will be near the building. The Bluegrass Community and Technical College campus, now under construction, is to the west, and Transylvania University, with 1,100 students, is a few blocks to the east. The Bread Box is the latest in a series of projects transforming Jefferson Street into a restaurant and entertainment corridor.

"The neighbors are happy because the corner went from being blighted to becoming a vibrant, positive influence," says Self.



West Sixth Brewing is the first Kentucky brewery to can its own beer.

"We measure success not only by making great craft beer, but also by how it helps our community. We always strive to protect our environment, even if it costs us more. The microbrewery donates 6 percent of its profits to the local charities and nonprofit organizations that make our community a great place to live," Self said.

The owners are excited to be located in this neighborhood, breathing life back into the building and fostering the growing bike culture in Lexington.

**Helpful Hint:** Though brownfields may not seem attractive at first, they often are more cost-effective than vacant land since they have an infrastructure and utilities in place.